**Shir Ami B’nai Mitzvah Information/FAQs:**

**B’nai Mitzvah Attire for Services: Friday night and Saturday**

* All girls and women on the bimah should be appropriately dressed, with their shoulders covered (no spaghetti straps, thin tank straps, low-cut tops, or off-the-shoulder styles). Sleeveless tops/dresses with “thick” straps to the edge of the shoulder are fine. Skirt/dress length at finger-tip length.
* All boys and men on the bimah should be appropriately dressed, with a jacket and preferably tie for Saturday services. Khakis and/or dress pants for Friday nights are suggested. Avoiding jeans is preferred as well.
* All B’nai mitzvah boys and girls are encouraged to wear a tallit and boys a kippah

\*PLEASE NOTE- IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT A SPECIFIC ITEM OF CLOTHING, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO A MEMBER OF THE B’NAI MITZVAH LIAISON COMMITTEE IN ADVANCE, AND THEY WILL GLADLY ADVISE.

**Donation(s) to Shir Ami**

* B’nai Mitzvah families are invited to make donation(s) to Shir Ami in honor of their child becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These are often made in appreciation of clergy and tutors and can be in any denomination (often $18 or a multiple of $18). Additional options include an engraved leaf on the tree of life wall, or a brick outside at Shir Ami. Please reach out to office staff for more information if interested in these additional options.

**Family/friends participation**

* B’nai Mitzvah family members and friends are invited to take part in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.
* Opportunities to participate include: blessings before and after the Torah reading, opening and closing of the ark before and after the Torah reading, and before and after Aleinu, dressing of the Torah, passing the Torah, presenting Talit to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.
* Non-Jewish family members/friends are welcomed and invited to participate equally.

**Friday Night Service**

* B’nai Mitzvah families are expected to attend Friday night services the night before their child becomes Bar/Bat mitzvah.
* Your family will be asked to light the candles on the bimah and lead basic Shabbat prayers such as Kiddush and Motzi. Your child may also be asked to lead a prayer he/she will be leading on Saturday, such as the V’Ahavtah. Cantor will review and provide copies of these prayers in the weeks leading up to that day.
* There will be an Oneg after the service and a cake for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. This is covered by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee, which is paid in advance of your child’s date.

**Tutoring/Lessons**

* B’nai Mitzvah students will start formal preparation with a member of the Shir Ami staff approximately 9-10 months before his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Tutoring will take place weekly and tutors will reach out to families a few weeks prior to starting, to set a scheduled day and time. Lessons are 20 minutes long, and your child will be expected to practice regularly throughout the week.
* Students will transition to working with Cantor Kohlbrenner approximately 8 weeks prior their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students will also meet with Rabbi Briskin 4-6 times in the weeks leading up to their B’nai Mitzvah and the family will have 1-2 rehearsals within 2 weeks of their child’s date. If your child attends overnight camp in the summer, special arrangements can be made for phone and/or video tutoring during those weeks.

**Photography**

* B’nai Mitzvah families are welcome to have pictures taken at Shir Ami. Pictures can be taken on the grounds, as well as in the sanctuary and on the bimah. Families may do so on a selected day/time in the days leading up to the event, or on the actual day of them becoming bar/bat mitzvah. For example, prior to a morning service around 8:45 a.m, or in the late afternoon prior to a Havdallah service. This should be worked out ahead of time with a staff member from the Shir Ami office.
* Professional photography IS permitted DURING the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. However, the photographer must remain in the back of the sanctuary and may not interfere with the service nor be distracting in any way. Any family wishing to do so should speak with clergy for further clarity and expectations within the weeks leading up to their date.
* Video will be taken during services and is available for purchase through Shir Ami. Contact Jodi Friedman in the office for info. and pricing.

**Tikun Olam/Mitzvah Project**

* In the months leading up to becoming a bar/bat mitzvah, students are expected to give back to their community and those in need in a meaningful way. This can be done in a variety of ways. Please refer to the Suggested Mitzvah/Tikkun Olam list for local ideas and suggestions. If you have not yet received this list, please feel free to contact a member of the B’Nai Mitzvah Liaison Committee. Committee members are also happy to advise in more detail if needed.

**Ushering**

* B’nai Mitzvah families are required to usher during one Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, prior to their own child’s. Staff will reach out in advance to schedule this with you, and more detailed information on your duties will be given as it nears. Please be aware you will be expected to arrive roughly 15 minutes prior to this service, and remain present throughout the duration of the service as well.

**Timing of services:**

* Friday night services begin at 7:30
* Saturday a.m service begins at 10:15
* Saturday p.m/havdallah service begins at 4:30

**It is commonplace to put an earlier time on your invitation than when the service actually starts. This ensures guests arrive on time. For example, 10:00 on the invitation for Saturday a.m service is suggested, given services will begin roughly between 10:15 and 10:30.**

Thank you and we look forward to guiding your family as you and your child approach this wonderful milestone!

The B’Nai Mitzvah Liaison Committee-

Chairperson- Allison Leff

Committee members- Robin Firestone, Melody Hassid, Rachel Lesser, and Rori Levine